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G.H. Morris







BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
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Thesis

ATTIC GREEK DRAMA IN  
THE FIFTH CENTURY B. C.

by

George Henry Morris  
(A.A., Harvard, 1929)

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requirements for the degree of  
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THE BEAUTY OF GREEK DRAMA.

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## OUTLINE FOR THESIS

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## INTRODUCTION.

- 1 -

In order to appreciate the beginnings of drama, it is absolutely necessary that we should first know something about that remarkable race, the Greeks, whose origin is like that of all other races shrouded in mystery.

Speculation, as busy as Virgil's "rumor," has pointed to the Euphrates Valley as the probable birthplace of the human race. Here, we are told, humanity at length so prodigiously outgrew its limitations that more space became necessary. The human bee-hive having over-flowed, its multitudes must seek habitation elsewhere. So the great exodus began, and teeming myriads, like the mighty forces before ancient Troy -

"Poured forth by thousands, darken all the coast  
As from some rocky cleft the shepherd sees  
Clustering in heaps on heaps the driving bees,  
Rolling and blackening, swarms succeeding swarms,  
With deeper murmurs and more hoarse alarms;  
Dusky they spread a close embodied crowd,  
And o'er the vale descends the living cloud."<sup>1</sup>

What a subject it would have been for a moving picture scenario. One can almost hear a frantic director shouting :  
"Lights! - camera! - action! " And then - what a picture!

Part of the swarms heading westward swept down through what we now call Thessaly. From this point they later spread across the whole peninsular of Greece, whose five claws seemed to be grasping for the island of Crete, whence, buried in the mists of hoary antiquity, came a more ancient civilization than their own. From Crete too, the Greeks were to get much of their

<sup>1</sup>Homer's Iliad, translated by Pope (book 2)







culture.

The new settlers became herders of cattle and tillers of the soil. They were crude and hardy and probably soon became attached to the rocky heights, and pleasant valleys of their adopted country. Under such conditions, where food and shelter were assured, it is not surprising that when leisure permitted, imagination and fancy came into its own; and the newcomers, calling themselves Hellenes, having made primitive excursions into the sciences and mathematics, principally geometry, were at a later period to astonish with a new surprise - the drama, their crowning achievement.

Now these Hellenes were like no other people of whom we have record. They were entirely different from the Jews, Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians. Their attitude toward life was often less practical and more visionary. They were far more interested in things of the mind than in physical things - unless the physical was endowed, with or clothed in beauty. The Greeks were beauty lovers. It was said of them that unlike the practical Romans of later date, they never built a good road. The Romans were famous road-builders, while the Greek streets even in the time of Pericles were narrow, ill-built, and a disgrace to Athens. But if the Greek was a poor mechanic and preferred to "loaf and invite his soul" he was, nevertheless, thinking great thoughts. In his case, at least, idleness was the nurse of achievement, and posterity has never doubted the value to mankind of that achievement.

The Greeks have a peculiar interest for us; they were Aryans like ourselves. Then too, some have likened our present advanced stage of civilization to that of the high-







water mark of Greek culture - the age of Pericles. Of these remarkable people the astute Macaulay says:

"There seems to be --- every reason to believe that in general intelligence, the Athenian populace far surpassed the lower orders of any community that has ever existed."<sup>1</sup>

True, they had few books, but what books they had were the best. How could a people be poor who had Homer, Theocritus, Hesiod and Herodotus? Let us again view Athens in its glory through the eyes of Macaulay; he says:

"Let us for a moment transport ourselves, in thought, to that glorious city. Let us imagine that we are entering its gates in the time of its power and glory. A crowd is assembled around a portico. All are gazing with delight at the entablature; for Phidias is putting up the frieze. We turn into another street; a rhapsodist is reciting there: men, women, children are thronging round him: the tears are running down their cheeks; their eyes are fixed: their very breath is still; for he is telling how Priam fell at the feet of Achilles, and kissed those hands, - the terrible, - the murderous, - which had slain so many of his sons. We enter the public places; there is a ring of youths, all leaning forward, with sparkling eyes, and gestures of expectation. Socrates is pitted against the famous Atheist from Ionia, and has just brought him to a contradiction in terms. But we are interrupted. The herald is crying, 'Room for the Pyrtanes'. The general assembly is to meet. The people are swarming in on every side. Proclamation is made - 'Who wishes to speak?' There is a shout and a clapping of hands; Pericles is mounting the stand. Then for a play of Sophocles: and away to sup with Aspasia."<sup>2</sup>

Truly a brilliant and realistic picture of Athens in all its glory. Perhaps after all we moderns are but little better off than were these old Athenians who enjoyed life to the utmost and with as keen a relish as many of us now do. That there is no great difference between our life and theirs has been proved by recent excavations which have brought to light astonishing facts, clearly showing that many of the arts, sciences, and

<sup>1</sup>Macaulay "The Athenian Orators".

<sup>2</sup>- the same







modes of living that we had always considered new are in reality very, very old. Human nature is the same now as then. Not long ago workmen at Pompeii uncovered walls containing writing exactly the same as some that we see inscribed on walls by street urchins of today.

But in passing there is one figure we are reluctant to leave - Socrates. Ugly, bald, and slovenly, yet the greatest thinker of his time. What would we not give to see him as his contemporaries saw him, drinking like a gentlemen, yet seldom if ever drunk; buttonholing the unwary with his merciless cross-fire of questions that could not be answered. "What is Truth, Beauty, Virtue?" he would ask. As the helpless victims stumbled through a makeshift explanation their persecutor would riddle them through and through with unanswerable logic. The opponent, often a shrewd Sophist, was usually forced to yield ingloriously the palm of victory to his tormentor. Strangely enough the "gad-fly" himself, was on occasion the butt of the great comic dramatist, Aristophanes. But it must have been all in fun, for in reality Socrates and Aristophanes were friends.

We can hardly overestimate our debt to the Greeks who have bequeathed to us such priceless gifts of art, science, and that pearl of great price, the drama. The effects of this generous legacy have reached down through the succeeding ages, influencing all civilizations. Edith Hamilton says; "We think and feel differently because of what a little Greek town did during a century or two, twenty-four hundred years ago. What was there produced of art and thought







has never been surpassed and very rarely equalled, and the stamp of it is upon all the art and all the thought of the Western world. "<sup>1</sup>

Just before this period, drama came into being, originating among the Dorians, reaching its peak at Athens. Woven into a consummate fabric of artistic design it developed from incoherent beginnings through the genius of a virile yet aesthetic race. Greek drama typifies the soul of Greece. It is the expression of the rapt beauty inherent in the people. It is life itself with its lights and shadows, its joys and sorrows.

And after all what is life but an unending drama. Every life is a drama, with its beginning, its crisis, falling action and catastrophe. In youth do we not have exposition proclaiming the man to be; in full manhood, the highest point of dramatic interest; finally the tapering off, falling action, and, last of all, the dénouement?

So then drama is all about us if we have eyes to see it. History is not only a pageant or procession of events, but also a colorful and compelling drama. Someone has said that the two greatest dramas were the Flood, by which all creation was cleansed and chastened by means of water; and the World War which purified in fiery baptism a universe which travailed in agony to a re-birth. Old systems were abandoned for new; antiquated traditions replaced; moth-eaten customs have slunk away in the darkness unable to bear the light of a new day.

<sup>1</sup> Edith Hamilton in "The Greek Way".







No wonder then that drama has always been popular. After all it typifies existence, and everyone is interested in the life that ebbs and flows about him.

To describe this throbbing, pulsating life was the aim of the great Greek dramatists. Aeschylus, relying on legends and the Homeric epics, wrote of gods and heroes just as if he had known them at first hand, but investing them with a grandeur and solemnity that has never been excelled by any poet; Sophocles "Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole" was interested in human motives and mostly in man's problems; Euripides, the practical man of the world, was the modernist and realist among the tragedians; he depicted life as it was, not as it ought to be. Mrs. Browning happily says, characterizing him:

"Our Euripides, the human  
With his droppings of warm tears  
And his touches of things common,  
Till they rose to touch the spheres."

Aristophanes, unlike the others, exploited the faults and foibles of his age, and while unsparing of any who came within the reach of his acid-tipped dart, he was particularly antagonistic towards Euripides, whom he insulted and taunted unceasingly. Socrates was a favorite target of his but subsequent researches make it apparent that this was merely "playing", for we now know that the two spent many a pleasant evening together. Aristophanes' most hated enemy was the demagogue, Cleon, who, on several very exciting occasions, talked the Athenian populace into doing things for which they later paid a fatal reckoning.



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## BEGINNINGS OF DRAMA.

-11-

Drama in Greece originated in the worship of the wine-god, Dionysus, or Bacchus as the Romans called him. This god was also interested in the Muses and the Arts. It was customary at vintage time for cultivators and harvesters of the grape to assemble together in a mirthful gathering in honor of their great patron. As the revellers caroused and chanted, the extravagant orgies often developed into frenzied capering and wild gesticulations, as they became filled with the god. Onlookers were often mocked with ribald jests. In time this fun-making, at first extemporary, passed under the control of a chorus leader who saw to it that the chorus was properly trained. To the best chorus a skin filled with wine was given as a prize. Probably mimicking in caricature certain persons whom they felt inclined to ridicule, the leader of the chorus would hold forth in a dialogue with the actor who represented the victim of the satire. Although crude at first, this "spoofing" may have acquired metrical form, which developed into real comedy.

The word comedy is derived from the Greek "comedia", which some critics maintain means "village song"; others, "the song of the revellers". We think the latter much the more expressive, and more in keeping with the spirit of its usage. The real founder of Greek comedy was Epicharnus of Sicily, a contemporary of Pindar and Aeschylus. He introduced the plot. Before this there was merely a series of episodes each describing a fantastic or humorous situation.



Drinks in Greece originated in the worship of the wine-god, Dionysus, or Bacchus as the Romans called him. This god was also interested in the music and the arts. It was customary at vintage time for cultivators and harvesters of the grapes to assemble together in a spirited gathering in honor of their guest patron. In the revelry, carousing and singing, the extravagant cries often developed into frenzied cackling and wild gesticulations as they became filled with the god. Onlookers were often worked with rapturous haste. In time this fun-making, at first extremely, passed under the control of a chorus leader who saw to it that the chorus was properly trained. To the best chorus a skin filled with wine was given as a prize. Probably mistaken in certain persons whom they felt inclined to ridicule, the leader of the chorus would hold forth in a dialogue with the actor who represented the victim of the satire. Although crude at first, this "spoofing" may have acquired satirical form, which developed into real comedy.

The word comedy is derived from the Greek "komedia" which some critics maintain means "village song"; others "the song of the revelers". We think the latter much the more expressive and more in keeping with the spirit of its name. The real founder of Greek comedy was Epicharmus of Sicily, a contemporary of Linus and Anacreon. He introduced the plot. Before this there was merely a series of episodes each describing a fantastic or humorous situation.



Epicharmus unified these episodes. His comedy did not grow from the Comus, as did that of Attica.

It is well to remember that not only was Dionysus, the god of wine, but also "natura creator". It was he also who in the spring awakened the sleeping earth, loosening the bonds of tyrant winter; in the summer his beneficent influence hovered over bounteous fields; at the approach of winter he sadly withdrew into himself.

"Dionysus came down from the wild mountains of Thrace into Hellas, already worshipped as a god of the groves and the fields and of fertility; and with the very special power of lifting mortals to a share in divine ecstasy".<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the other Olympians, Dionysus was a roving deity. The Greeks never thought of him as seated majestically on a throne, but active, restless, and rather apart from the other gods and goddesses. He is happiest when marching along surrounded by vine-clad Maenads and goat-footed Satyrs. His migrations were enlivened by a noisy accompaniment of drums, cymbals and flutes. In his honor were sung artistic choral songs; in the spring these songs celebrated his joyous entrance into the world; in the winter they told of his conflicts and his sorrows.

It was generally agreed that the word "tragedy" means in Greek "goat-song". Whether a goat was given as a prize to

<sup>1</sup> Sheldon Cheney in "The Theatre".



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the best singer, or because of the goat-like costume worn by the singers, critics are not agreed; but the second probability is accepted today.

The Dithyramb was a song and dance by a chorus of fifty men in honor of Dionysus. It was probably derived from a much older ritual or ceremonial performed at tombs of ancient heroes.

Aristotle says that the Dithyramb was the starting point of tragedy, the Phallic Procession of comedy.

The Phallic Procession was, like the Dithyramb, a Comus or wandering dance leading the revellers in a sort of sacred romp through the whole of a village or countryside. It would be specially appropriate to the Rural Dionysia - the harvest home of the vintage, or the Greater Dionysia, which celebrated the return of spring.

"The Dithyramb was the direct address to the god of nature; the Phallic Procession gave vent in yet wilder abandon to the loosest of nature joys." <sup>1</sup>

Usually at Athens after the Trilogy (three tragedies) had been finished a fourth play of a burlesque nature was added to relieve the tension. This fourth play was called the satyr-drama. The four together formed a "tetralogy". The satyr-drama was composed of a chorus made up of satyrs, mythical creatures half goat and half man, who were supposed to be the followers of Dionysus. The leading characters

<sup>1</sup> Richard G. Moulton in "The Ancient Classical Drama."



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Aristotle says that the Dithyramb was the starting point of tragedy, the Phallic Procession of comedy. The Phallic Procession was like the Dithyramb, a common or wandering dance leading the revelers in a sort of sacred romp through the whole of a village or countryside. It would be especially appropriate to the Rural Dionysia - the harvest home of the vintage, or the Greater Dionysia, which celebrated the return of spring.

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of the satyr-dramas were usually either tragic heroes and kings, or strange mythological beings who afforded possibilities for humorous treatment. At first dramatic themes were devoted exclusively to the worship of Dionysus; later, drama was offered in which no trace of this worship was found; but the chorus retained the satyr-like actors of the ancient drama.

Just as we know that before Homer derived much of his knowledge from a long series of epic poets who lived long before his time, so we are certain that Aeschylus inherited his art from predecessors. Of these two only are sufficiently known to be worthy of mention - Arion and Thespis.

Arion of Corinth lived about 600 B.C. He was the first to put the Dithyrambic chorus of fifty into satyr costume and have them sing, while thus attired, the sufferings and adventures of their great leader, Dionysus.

This was an important step taken in the development of drama - impersonation. Arion, by dressing his Dithyrambic chorus in goat-like costumes, had fixed for all time the name of the kind of poetry which grew out of the Dithyramb; the Greek name for goat - "tragos", is a component part of the word "tragedy", which means "goat-song".

About fifty years after this innovation, came Thespis, the Attic poet, with further changes. He introduced an actor entirely distinct from the chorus. This actor stepped out of the chorus and recited some lines or verses to the other satyr members, an innovation apparently simple



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yet really of vast importance; for here was the germ of both acting and dialogue.

With these great pioneers, drama was getting off to a flying start. Archilochus had perfected the iambic form for dialogue; and with this, the union of epic and choral lyric welded drama into a substantial art. The way had been blazed for the mighty tragedians who were soon to follow.

### AESCHYLUS , THE SUBLIME.

-111-

As in the case of Shakespeare we are able to glean but few facts concerning the life of Aeschylus, first of the great Greek tragedians. Throughout his plays we can detect the army veteran by the manner in which Aeschylus handles war themes; just as Shakespeare unconsciously often reveals his personality. We see plainly in the Aeschylean dramas the stern, rugged and pious nature of the Greek poet; his fondness for brooding on things divine; his attempts to justify the ways of God to man. His services during the Persian Wars are constantly pictured in his plays.

It is generally agreed that Aeschylus was born about 525 B.C., in Eleusis, a suburb of Athens, and home of the famed Eleusinian Mysteries. Here was the centre of the cult of Demeter, where yearly processions of worshippers attended the initiation of neophytes into the sacred rites of the beloved goddess; rites so jealously guarded that even to this day no one really knows how they were conducted.



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### ÆSCHYLUS, THE SWIFTER.

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It occasionally happened that an Athenian was accused of publishing these secret ceremonies, and woe unto him if convicted! It is said that Aeschylus, while acting in one of his own plays, made a doubtful reference to Demeter. The audience, most of whom were initiates, suspecting that the poet was revealing the mysteries of their cult, rose in fury against him. Aeschylus, sensing the fact that discretion was the better part of valor and that no one but a fool puts his hand in the dog's mouth, fled ingloriously to the altar of Dionysus in the centre of the orchestra, and pleaded sanctuary. Though safe for a time, when he emerged he was seized and haled before the mighty court of the Areopagus. To the charge of "Profanation" he pleaded ignorance of the secret nature of the rites. Fortunately he was acquitted because of his fine military record at Marathon. Perhaps the matter of his connection with the aristocracy expedited his release; for he was well-born, well-bred, well-educated, both intellectually and religiously.

The poet went to Syracuse at the invitation of Hiero I, Tyrant of that city, who was trying to make his realm a literary centre comparable with Athens. Apparently Aeschylus was not deaf to the appeal of "heavy metal" or lucre. He was in good company at Hiero's court, for he was enabled to "glitter" with such luminaries as Pindar, Bacchylides, and Simonides, all "best-sellers" of the day. Aeschylus paid a second visit to Syracuse, which some claimed was because of chagrin at his defeat by his young



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rival Sophocles, who was only twenty-two. When he made a final trip he was nearly seventy. An oracle had warned; "A stroke from heaven shall cause thy death". The old legend verified the sacred edict by stating that one day while the aged bard was walking along the shore, an eagle, carrying aloft a tortoise, let it fall upon the bald head of the venerable poet, killing him instantly. On his tomb at Gela is the inscription; "Beneath this stone lies Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, the Athenian, who perished in the wheat-bearing land of Gela; of his noble prowess the grove of Marathon can speak, or the long-haired Persian who knows it well".<sup>1</sup> This was a delicate and deserved tribute to the hero who had courageously fought for his country in the great battles of Marathon, Artemisium, Salamis, and Plataea. Incidentally his brother Euphorion fell at the head of a valiant storming party.

Of the ninety or so plays he wrote, it is estimated that from forty-eight to eighty were victorious in gaining the award over his rivals. This large number is due to the fact that a tragic "victory" included a group of four plays, that is a "tetralogy". Similarly with his great rival Sophocles, only seven of his plays have come down to us; but all of these are masterpieces.

Aeschylus is regarded as the real founder of Athenian tragedy. His innovations were revolutionary, and included - the introduction of a second actor; an improvement in masks; the new type of dancing; enlarged use of properties; a new

<sup>1</sup> Joseph R. Taylor "The Story of the Drama".



rival Sophocles, who was only twenty-two. When he made a  
 final trip he was nearly seventy. An oracle had warned;  
 "A stroke from heaven shall cause thy death". The old  
 legend verified the sacred edict by stating that one day  
 while the aged poet was walking along the shore, an eagle  
 carrying aloft a tortoise, let it fall upon the bald head  
 of the venerable poet, killing him instantly. On his  
 tomb at Gela is the inscription: "Beneath this stone lies  
 Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, the Athenian, who perished in  
 the wheat-bearing land of Gela; of his noble prowess the  
 grove of Marathon can speak, or the long-haired Persian who  
 knows it well".<sup>1</sup> This was a delicate and deserved tribute  
 to the hero who had courageously fought for his country in  
 the great battles of Marathon, Artemision, Salamis, and  
 Plataea. Incidentally his brother Euphorion fell at the  
 head of a valiant storming party.  
 Of the ninety or so plays he wrote, it is estimated that  
 from forty-eight to eighty were victorious in gaining the  
 award over his rivals. This large number is due to the fact  
 that a tragic "victory" included a group of four plays, that  
 is a "tetralogy". Similarly with his great rival  
 Sophocles, only seven of his plays have come down to us;  
 but all of these are masterpieces.  
 Aeschylus is regarded as the founder of Athenian  
 tragedy. His innovations were revolutionary, and included -  
 the introduction of a second actor; an improvement in masks;  
 the new type of dancing; enlarged use of properties; a new



style of costume for the chorus, and actors; a wider choice of subjects.

His most important innovation, that of using a second actor, made it possible to secure for the first time real dramatic dialogue independent of the chorus.

His language is profound, often untranslatable, revelling in "the desperate compounds" as Professor Mahaffy styles them, which were the despair of students. But even in a good translation we are conscious of sublimity, expanse of power, depth and great religious feeling. We note that if Professor Mahaffy considers the poet "untranslatable" he also enthusiastically lauds him as "inimitable". That sad wag Aristophanes, though respectful of Aeschylus' stern defense of the old regime did not hesitate to ridicule the high-flown rhetoric of the dramatist. In the "Frogs" we are given an intimate insight into the lives of the three great tragedians - Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Throughout the Aeschylean tragedies one stern note is outstanding - he who sins must suffer; one cannot escape the penalty of wrong doing. For the sinner there can be no escape.

We have chosen a few selections from the "Agamemnon", as translated by Anna Swanwick, which will give an idea in brief form, of the beauty of this poets' expression.



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But even in a good translation we are conscious of simplicity, expansiveness of power, depth and great religious feeling. We note that if Professor Mahaffy considers

the poet "untranslatable" he also enthusiastically labels him as "inimitable". That was Aristotle, though

respectful of Aeschylus, stern because of the old regime did not hesitate to ridicule the high-flown rhetoric of the dramatist. In the "Trojan" we are given an intimate

insight into the lives of the three great tragedians -

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We have chosen a few selections from the "Agamemnon",

as translated by Anna Swanwick, which will give an idea in

brief form of the beauty of this poet's expression.



In the opening scene the palace of Agamemnon is shown. The Greek armies have been absent from home nine years, and the announcement of the capture of Troy is nightly expected. A watchman has been placed by Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, upon the roof of the palace to await the signal, which by a previous arrangement shall bring the news of victory, by means of a line of fires kindled along the high points between Troy and Argos. The lone watcher is complaining to himself of the weariness and hardship of his nightly task. Suddenly he sees the flash of the signal fire and in it he joyfully senses the end of his dreary vigil, and the restoration of the lost happiness of the royal house. The watchman is soliloquizing:

#### WATCHMAN

"I pray the gods deliv'rance from these toils,  
 This year-long watch which prone on Atreus' roof  
 With head ensconced in arm, dog-like I keep,  
 Marking the confluence of nightly stars;  
 And those bright potentates who bring to men  
 Winter and summer, signal in the sky.  
 Both in their wane I view and when they rise.  
 And for the beacons token now I watch,  
 The balze of fire, bearing from Troy a tale,  
 Tidings of capture; for so proudly hopes  
 A woman's heart, with manly counsel fraught  
 Dew drenched and restless in my nightly couch,  
 By dreams unvisited, for at my side,  
 In place of Sleep stands Fear, forbidding me,  
 Save in unquiet rest my lids to close.  
 Then when I think to chant a strain, or whistle  
 (Such against sleep my tuneful counter-charm),  
 Meaning I wail the sorrows of this house,  
 Not wisely governed as in days of old.

(Suddenly beholding the beacon light he starts  
 to his feet).



In the opening scene the palace of Agamemnon is shown. The Greek armies have been absent from home nine years, and the announcement of the capture of Troy is highly expected. A watchman has been placed by Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, upon the roof of the palace to await the signal, which by a previous arrangement shall bring the news of victory, by means of a line of fires kindled along the high points between Troy and Greece. The lone watcher is complaining to himself of the weariness and hardship of his nightly task. Suddenly he sees the flash of the signal fire and in it he joyfully senses the end of his dreary vigil, and the restoration of the lost happiness of the royal house. The watchman is soliloquizing:

#### WATCHMAN

"I pray the gods deliver me from these tortures!  
This year-long watch which Greece on Athens' roof  
With head encased in steel, has like I keep,  
Waiting the confidence of nightly news;  
And those bright potentates who bring to me  
Winter and summer, signal in the sky.  
Both in their ways I view and then they rise,  
And for the beacon taken now I watch.  
The blaze of fire, bearing from Troy a tale  
Tidings of capture; for so proudly hopes  
A woman's heart, with vainly counsel fraught,  
Her drunken and restless in my nightly couch,  
By dreams unvisited, for at my side,  
In place of sleep stands Pain, forbidding me,  
Save in my sleep, and my life to close.  
Then when I think to sleep a strain of whistle  
(Such against sleep my funeral counter-voicing)  
Morning I will the sorrows of this house,  
Not wisely covered as in days of old.  
(Suddenly beholding the beacon light he starts  
to his feet).



Hurrah! Hurrah! To Agamemnon's queen,  
 Thus with shrill cry I give th'appointed sign,  
 That from her couch uprising with all speed,  
 She in the palace jubilant may lift  
 The joyous shout to gratulate this torch  
 If Ilion's capital in truth be ta'en,  
 As shining forth, this beacon fire proclaims.

The chorus of elders then joyfully recount the labors of their chief and rejoice at his expected return; but their anticipated pleasure is not destined to be realized. Agamemnon returns, but his wife who has been shamelessly living with Aegisthos as paramour, treacherously invites the hero to her bath, whereafter entangling him in a net he is brutally murdered with an ax. Meanwhile Cassandra, daughter of Priam whom the king had brought with him from Troy, prophesies woe to the house. Seemingly she has heard the stricken king's cry -

Woe's me! I'm smitten with a deadly blow.

-----

Woe's me! Again! a second time I'm struck.

The chorus advise her to escape, but she better than they knows the futility of trying to evade doom.

There's no escape; brief respite, nothing more.

Chorus.

Well patient art thou and of dauntless mind.

Cassandra.

Yet dear to mortals is a glorious death.

The poor captive knows that the jealous Clytemnestra will soon



Written! Written! To the...  
That with which I live...  
That I have not...  
The in the...  
The...  
It...  
As...

The... of... then joyfully... the labor of  
their chief and... at his... return; but their  
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daughter of... whom the king had brought with him from  
Troy,... was to the house. ... she has heard  
the... king's cry -

Woe's me! I'm... with a deadly blow.

Woe's me! Again! a second time I'm struck.

The... advice... to escape, but she better than they  
knows the... of trying to evade them.

There's no escape; brief respite, nothing more.

There's.

Well... and of... mind.

....

Yet... to... is a... death.

The... knows that the... will soon



encompass her end, but she wants once more to behold the sun  
ere she dies, uttering these remarkable words -

Alas for man's estate. If Fortune smile,  
A shadow may o'turn it; should she frown,  
A moistened sponge the picture doth destroy.  
More than the first this doom my pity move;

This is pessimism worthy of Omar Khayyam, himself. Poor  
Cassandra knowing the stage is all set for her departure  
bursts into prophecy and announces her own death.

But all the gods will not slight us when we're dead;  
Another yet shall come a champion for us  
A son who slays his mother to avenge  
His father; and the exiled wanderer  
Far from his home, shall one day come again  
Upon these woes to set the coping-stone.

Suddenly Clytemnestra is seen standing in blood stained robes,  
and before her the corpse of Cassandra, and the corpse of  
Agamemnon in a silver bath covered with a net. Having com-  
pleted the slaughter, the queen and her paramour boldly pro-  
claim their intention of ruling the land. She consoles  
Aegisthos with -

These ceaseless barkings heed not thou;  
thyself and I together  
Ruling within these halls will all things  
wisely order.



encompass her and, but she waits once more to behold the sun  
ere she dies, uttering these remarkable words -

More than the first this deem my pity move;  
A momentary space the picture hath bestrode,  
A shadow may o'ershadow it; should she frown,  
Alas for man's estate, if Fortune smile.

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Cassandra knowing the signs is all set for her departure  
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pleted the slaughter, the Queen and her paramour boldly pro-  
claim their intention of ruling the land. She connects  
legislation with -

These careless barkings need not trouble  
themselves and I together  
Ruling within these halls will all things  
wisely order.



## SOPHOCLES - THE HUMANIST.

IV.

Sophocles was the second of the great triumvirate of Greek tragedians. Younger than Aeschylus he was like him, an aristocrat, and an intellectual. Mathew Arnold speaks of him as one -

"Who saw life steadily and saw it whole;  
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,  
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child".

In one of the most delicious portions of the poet's "Oedipus Coloneus" he gives vent to his love for his native place in almost Miltonic strain:

Chorus  
Strophe 1.

Thou art come in happy time,  
Stranger! to this blissful clime,  
Long for swiftest steeds renown'd.  
Fertilest of the regions round,  
Where, beneath the ivy shade,  
In the dew - besprinkled glade  
Many a love-lorn nightingale  
Warbles sweet her plaintive tale;  
Where the vine her clusters pours  
Her sweets secured from misty showers:  
Nor scorching suns, nor raging storm  
The beauties of the year deform.

Antistrophe 1.

Where the sweet narcissus growing,  
Where the yellow crocus blowing,  
Round the sacred altars twine,  
Off'ring to the powers divine;  
Where the pure springs perpetual flow,  
Wat'ring the verdent meads below  
Which, with the earth -enriching waves  
The fair Cephissus ever laves;



Agapocles was the second of the great trinitarians of  
Greek trinitarians. You know then Agapocles he was like him,  
an aristocrat, and an intellectual. He had a fine speech  
of him as one -

"Who saw life steadily and saw it whole;  
The mellow glory of the attic stage,  
Singer of sweet Colonus, and his child."

In one of the most delicious portions of the poet's  
"Colonus Colonus" he gives vent to his love for his native  
place in almost Miltonic strains:

Chorus  
Strophe I.

There art thou in happy time,  
Stranger! to this blessed olive  
long for sweetest olive branches;  
Westward of the temple round,  
Where, beneath the ivy shade,  
In the dew - perfumed glade  
Many a love-born nightingale  
Sings sweetest her plaintive tale;  
Where the vine her clusters hangs  
Her sweetest honey from airy showers;  
Her soothing hums, her ringing strain  
The heartless of the year deliver.

Antistrophe I.

There the sweet narcissus grows,  
Where the yellow crocus glows,  
Hush! the sacred altar shrine,  
Off'ring to the powers divine;  
There the white poppies perfume the flow,  
Whispering the verdant meads below,  
Which, with the earth - exhaling waves  
The fair Capricorn ever flows;



Where with his ever sporting train,  
 Bacchus wantons on the plain,  
 Pleased with the muses still to rove,  
 And golden Venus, queen of love.

Sophocles was the son of Sophillus, a wealthy manufacturer of cutlery. The fact of the poet being the son of a manufacturer exempted him from Athenian scorn. Had his father been a mere artisan, Sophocles would have been little better off than a slave, and decidedly "persona non grata". But the good fortune of birth allowed him to secure military and political posts.

At the age of fifteen, because of his beauty of face, he was chosen to lead a procession celebrating the recent victory of Salamis. At that time he was a pupil of the celebrated Lamprus, a teacher of music in Athens. It seems probable that the poet was well acquainted even then with the Greek lyric poets.

Through family influences he was appointed a general in the Samian War (440 - 439 B.C.) Here his military genius was hardly noticeable; Pericles, associated with him, hinted that Sophocles as a soldier, was a good poet. To his credit, however, the poet took no offense, but delighted in repeating his associate's criticism.

Like Aeschylus, Sophocles acted in some of his own plays. But he was prevented, because of a weak voice, from attaining histrionic eminence; he was unable to project his voice to the last rows of the tremendous open-air theatre at Athens; a theatre, it must be remembered, that seated seventeen thousand auditors! He could, however, toss the ball grace-



Where with his ever sporting train,  
Bacchus wanders on the plain,  
Flashed with the muses still to rove,  
And golden Vanna, queen of love.

Sophocles was the son of Sophilos, a wealthy man-  
ufacturer of pottery. The fact of the poet being the son  
of a manufacturer exempted him from Athenian taxes. Had  
his father been a mere artisan, Sophocles would have been  
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a theatre, it must be remembered, that seated seventeen  
thousand auditors! He could, however, lose the ball game-



fully, and play enchantingly on the lyre, (possibly old Lamprus taught him) and these things he did on the stage. His chief innovation was the introduction of a third actor, adding ease and elegance to the dialogue.

Much of his old age was spent at Athens, and a part probably, at Colonus. In 411 B.C., at the age of eighty-four, he was appointed one of the ten counselors whose duty it was "to maintain order in the state".

He died in 406 B.C., and was buried in the Deceleian Way - a road just outside of Athens.

Sophocles is said to have been of an amorous disposition, much the same as the poet Goethe of a later period. Like Goethe, too, he was handsome, and graceful. In his plays we see reverence for divine law which may be pitiless in its working, and inevitable, as in the "Oedipus", in which, while we pity the unfortunate hero and sympathize with his attempts to escape the web of Destiny, we nevertheless, are persuaded that sin cannot go unpunished. An ardent lover of his Athens, he never tired of singing her glories.

Dr. Francklin says of him: "His peculiar excellence seems to lie in the descriptive; and exclusive of his dramatic powers, he is certainly a greater poet than either of his illustrious rivals". Further along, Dr. Francklin calls him "the Raphael of the ancient drama". That Sophocles was a genuine Greek in his love of nature is evidenced by his beautiful lines relative to his native Colonus. He knew the stars - Orion and the Pleiades; the glories of the fields, the narcissus, the violet and the hyacinth.

Perhaps no better play could be used to show the power



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Perseus, the violet and the hyacinth.  
Perhaps no matter play would be good to show the power



and depth of Sophocles than the "Oedipus Tyrannus", called by Aristotle the perfect play. In this drama irony reigns supreme. The unfortunate hero (though he does not know it) is the murderer of his own father and the husband of his mother, also father by her of four children; the audience and cast are aware of this. When a plague seizes Thebes an oracle declares that it will cease only when the murderer of Laius shall be banished from Thebes. The murderer is, of course, Oedipus, who has not the least inkling of his villainy. Solemnly then Oedipus curses the malefactor and warns:

if by a foreign hand  
 The horrid deed was done, who points him out  
 Commands our thanks, and meets a sure reward;  
 But if there be who knows the murderer,  
 And yet conceals him from us, mark his fate,  
 Which here I do pronounce: Let none receive,  
 Throughout my Kingdom, none hold converse with him,  
 Nor offer prayer, nor sprinkle o'er his head  
 The sacred cup; let him be driven from all,  
 By all abandoned, and by all accursed;  
 For so the Delphic oracle declared,  
 And therefore to the gods I pay this duty,  
 And to the dead.

-----  
 If here  
 Within my palace I conceal the traitor,  
 On me and mine alight the vengeful curse!

Oedipus having unwittingly cursed himself to the queen's taste must have felt greatly relieved to have worked that out of his system, particularly since he felt certain that no criminal, however hardened, could survive such a tirade. Tiresias, the aged prophet, knowing the circumstances of the king's murder of Laius, sadly refrains from disclosing the



in 1900, the first year of the century, the population of the United States was 76 million. In 1910 it was 92 million. In 1920 it was 106 million. In 1930 it was 123 million. In 1940 it was 137 million. In 1950 it was 152 million. In 1960 it was 179 million. In 1970 it was 203 million. In 1980 it was 226 million. In 1990 it was 250 million. In 2000 it was 281 million. In 2010 it was 309 million. In 2020 it was 331 million.

The population of the United States has increased by 250 percent since 1900. This is due to a number of factors, including immigration, a high birth rate, and a decline in the death rate. The population of the United States is expected to continue to grow, reaching 400 million by 2050.

The population of the United States is composed of a variety of ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group is the white population, which makes up 60 percent of the total. Other large ethnic groups include the black population (13 percent), the Hispanic population (13 percent), and the Asian population (5 percent). The population of the United States is also becoming more diverse, with a growing number of people from other countries and ethnic groups.



awful truth. Later when he acquaints the king with the horrible tidings he is met with a bitter arraignment and accused of being foolish, and the murderer's accomplice. This is too much for the old prophet. He rises up in his anger and without mincing his words flays the king.

#### TIRESIAS.

The sentence which thou didst proclaim  
Falls on thyself; henceforth shall never man  
Hold converse with thee; for thou art accursed;  
The guilty cause of this our city's woes.

The king storms and rails at Tiresias until the prophet thoroughly angered delivers the fearful and crushing blow;

Thou art thyself the murderer whom thou seek'st

Oedipus is finally convinced of the drab truth, and Tiresias unwillingly gives the salient details of the king's "status" to the chorus, who lament pitifully. Meanwhile, Oedipus, to make certain that the seer's statement is true, talks with Jocasta, his wife, who faithfully stands by her accused husband. They interview the shepherd Polybus who had fostered the infant Oedipus. He admits that the king was not his son. The hand of fate is reaching out for the doomed ruler. Little by little he learns of his frightful errors. His agony is heartbreaking.

O me! at length the mystery's unravell'd;  
'Tis plain; 'tis clear; my fate is all determined.  
These are my parents who should not have been  
Allied to me: she is my wife, even she  
Whom nature had forbidden me to wed;



...first. Later when he explains the king with the  
horrible thing he is met with a bitter resentment and  
accused of being foolish, and the murderer's accomplice.  
This is too much for the old prophet. He rises up in his  
anger and without waiting his words leave the king.

### TIRIAS.

The sentence which thou didst proclaim  
Tells on thyself; for thou shalt never see  
Held converse with thee; for thou art accursed;  
The guilty cause of this our city's woes.

The king rises and tells of Tirias until the prophet  
thoroughly angered delivers the forecast and warning blow;

Then art thyself the murderer whom thou seek'st

Oedipus is finally convinced of the truth, and Tirias  
unwillingly gives the salient details of the king's statement  
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the infant Oedipus. He admits that the king was not his son.  
The news of this is received not for the hoped relief.  
Little by little he learns of his frightful error. His agony  
is heartbreaking.

O me! at length the mystery's unraveled;  
This plain; this clear; my fate is all determined.  
These are my parents who should not have been  
lied to me; and in my life, even the  
thou nature had forbidden me to wed;



I have slain him who gave me life, and now  
Of thee O light! I take my last farewell,  
For Oedipus shall ne'er behold thee more.

It would be difficult to find in any literature a greater example of pathos than this. We are compelled to pity the unfortunate Oedipus who, buffeted by fate, unknowingly commits the most frightful crimes known to man - murder and incest. It really seemed as though the gods were laughing at him, their plaything. It seemed impossible that any further misery could be added to his cup of misfortune which was apparently filled to the brim and flowing over. But alas for human nature! Jocasta hangs herself, and Oedipus nearly rendered insane by sorrow tears out his own eyes, and submits to banishment at his own request, by Creon, brother to Jocasta, and now king of Thebes. The chorus gently advise -

Thebans! now behold  
The great, the mighty Oedipus, who once  
The sphinx's dark enigma could unfold;  
Who less to fortune than to wisdom owed;  
In virtue as in rank to all superior:  
Yet fallen at last to deepest misery.  
Let mortals hence be taught to look beyond  
The present time, nor dare to say a man  
Is happy 'til the last decisive hour  
Shall close his life without the taste of woe.



EURIPIDES, third member of the great tragic group, was born probably about B.C. 480, at Salamis - some say on the same day on which the great naval battle was fought - whether it is alleged his parents and many other Athenians had fled in order to escape the expected invasion by the Persians. His father Mnesarchus, according to tradition, was a retail trader; while his mother Clito sold herbs in the market place. That was, Aristophanes, careless handler of reputations, and no respecter of persons or personalities, loved to depict Clito mockingly, with her basket of vegetables.

The man is bitterer than his mother's pot-herbs!

This market gardener's son?

It seems almost too bad to spoil a good joke by stating that EURIPIDES' parents were not mental; in fact there is proof that they were people of consequence, as attested by Philochorus, a dependable authority of the Alexandrian period. Because of the fact that EURIPIDES owned a library it is quite certain that his parents possessed considerable wealth; for very few persons of that day owned extensive collections of books. In those times manuscripts were laboriously copied by hand, and since even a single book cost considerable, it is evident that a library represented a large outlay of money, in fact a fortune. He could not have received the money for



these books from the proceeds of his plays, for he was not a successful dramatist; his triumphs in literary contests were few and far between; thus obviously he received the money from his parents.

Another indication of his parents' standing may be inferred from the fact that Euripides was given a liberal education under expensive teachers. As a boy he had served an apprenticeship at painting. In his "Ion" is a careful description of a tapestry at Delphi.

It is said that he also received a thorough training in athletics; one ancient biographer asserted that he even won a contest in boxing. The famous statue of Euripides in the Vatican, with its powerful chest, broad shoulders and muscular arms show the poet to have been an athlete of no mean ability. In addition he knew a good deal about professional athletes, a class for which he had nothing but contempt.

He is believed by some to have had two wives, Melito and Choirile, whose infidelity caused him much distress; other critics maintain that Melito and Choirile were merely two names for the same wife.

Euripides is often referred to as the first great woman hater, because his treatment of women on the stage was savage and cruel in the extreme. Yet he did not overlook the nobility and beauty of character in some women as witness the "Iphigenia" and "Alcestis".

Strangely enough not one of his own melodramatic plays exceeded the accounts of Euripides' death. One version has it



I have slain him who gave me life, and now  
Of these O light! I take my last farewell;  
For Odysseus shall no more behold these shores.

It would be difficult to find in any literature a greater  
example of pathos than this. We are compelled to pity the  
unfortunate Odysseus who, buffeted by fate, unknowingly commits  
the most frightful crimes known to man - murder and incest.  
It really seemed as though the gods were laughing at him.  
Their plaything. It seemed impossible that any further misery  
could be added to his cup of misfortune which was apparently  
filled to the brim and flowing over. But alas for human  
nature! Jealousy hangs herself, and Odysseus nearly renounced  
himself by sorrow tears out his own eyes, and submits to  
banishment at his own request, by Ulysses, brother to Jealousy,  
and now King of Thebes. The chorus gently advise -

Thou shalt now behold  
The great, the mighty Odysseus, who once  
The world's dark empire could unfold;  
Who less to fortune than to wisdom owed;  
In virtue as in rank to all superior;  
Yet fallen at last to deepest misery.  
Let mortal's hopes be taught to look beyond  
The present time, nor dare to say a man  
Is happy till the last decisive hour  
Shall close his life without the taste of woe.



## EURIPIDES - THE REALIST.

## V.

Euripides, third member of the great tragic group, was born, probably about B.C. 480, at Salamis - some say on the same day on which the great naval battle was fought - whither it is alleged his parents and many other Athenians had fled in order to escape the expected invasion by the Persians. His father Mnesarchus, according to tradition, was a retail trader; while his mother Clito sold herbs in the market place. That mad wag, Aristophanes, careless handler of reputations, and no respecter of persons or personalities, loved to depict Clito mockingly, with her basket of vegetables.

The man is bitterer than his mother's pot-herbs<sup>1</sup>

This market gardener's son<sup>2</sup>

It seems almost too bad to spoil a good joke by stating that Euripides' parents were not menials; in fact there is proof that they were people of consequence, as attested by Philochorus, a dependable authority of the Alexandrian period.

Because of the fact that Euripides owned a library it is quite certain that his parents possessed considerable wealth; for very few persons of that day owned extensive collections of books. In those times manuscripts were laboriously copied by hand, and since even a single book cost considerable, it is evident that a library represented a large outlay of money, in fact a fortune. He could not have received the money for

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these books from the proceeds of his plays, for he was not a successful dramatist; his triumphs in literary contests were few and far between; thus obviously he received the money from his parents.

Another indication of his parents' standing may be inferred from the fact that Euripides was given a liberal education under expensive teachers. As a boy he had served an apprenticeship at painting. In his "Ion" is a careful description of a tapestry at Delphi.

It is said that he also received a thorough training in athletics; one ancient biographer asserted that he even won a contest in boxing. The famous statue of Euripides in the Vatican, with its powerful chest, broad shoulders and muscular arms show the poet to have been an athlete of no mean ability. In addition he knew a good deal about professional athletes, a class for which he had nothing but contempt.

He is believed by some to have had two wives, Melito and Choirile, whose infidelity caused him much distress; other critics maintain that Melito and Choirile were merely two names for the same wife.

Euripides is often referred to as the first great woman hater, because his treatment of women on the stage was savage and cruel in the extreme. Yet he did not overlook the nobility and beauty of character in some women as witness the "Iphigenia" and "Alcestis".

Strangely enough not one of his own melodramatic plays exceeded the accounts of Euripides' death. One version has it



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that the poet, while at the court of Archelaus in Pella took a walk through the countryside and was mistaken by a pack of Archelaus' hunting dogs for a wild animal, and torn to pieces. Whatever the cause of his end, the news of his death created intense grief at Athens. His rival, Sophocles, showed his sympathy by wearing black, while the actors of the chorus in the Dionysiac theatre appeared without their wreaths, to signify their appreciation of the great tragedian. The Athenians unable to secure the body of Euripides from Macedonia, built a small cenotaph to his memory on the road leading down to the Piraeus. Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily, bought at a high price the lyre, stylus, and writing tablets which Euripides had owned.

Euripides must be regarded in the light of one who worked under a handicap, and that no slight one. His great predecessors, Aeschylus and Sophocles, drawing copiously from that great storehouse of Greek legends which included tales of the House of Atreus, of Troy, of the family of Laius at Thebes, of Hercules, of Jason and of Theseus, were unsurpassable in their heroic treatment of these myths. It is like a beautiful pattern in tapestry which has been so marvelously executed that it is perfection itself, and cannot be improved upon. Such was the position of Euripides. Forced to use the staple materials of the masters, Aeschylus and Sophocles, he found it almost impossible to improve on, if even equal their work.

In order to understand the position of Euripides we must note the changes which have taken place. Religion, art,



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Philosophy and even manners were different than in the time of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Athens had become a centre of progressive thought. Teachers of rhetoric held forth in prominent wrestling-grounds and gardens, lecturing and disputing. Dialectic was the order of the day. Philosophers and sophists criticized even the gods, suggesting a new idea -Monotheism. The old fabric of Hellanic custom and mythical religion was beginning to unravel. People had become passionately interested in the assembly with its heated debate, and the law courts, where were aired personal affairs and tragedies of private life. The function of the Athenian citizen was to talk and listen. The youth aspired to talk well on every subject, win cases in court, criticize speeches of others. Surely such people were not like the ones who listened to the sublime Aeschylus or the noble Sophocles. No, it was almost a different race, less rugged and moral, more disputatious and melodramatic

The youths who in Aeschylus' day would have mingled in hardy muscular sports and games were succeeded by a softer, less moderate type who drove their own chariots, gambled with dice and fighting-cock, and did just about as they pleased without restraint. The austerity of Aeschylus, and the sedateness of Sophocles had passed. Times had indeed changed! The people no longer followed the Titanic productions of the old masters; they ignored the grandeur of Aeschylus and the perfect ideals of Sophocles. What they wanted was a chronicler who voiced the spirit of the times; and Euripides, artistic and modernistic was the answer. Yet, strangely



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enough, he was never popular at Athens. Discarding the old theme of Nemesis, he introduced ideas that interested the modern Athenians - sophistic arguments, law court pleadings, bickerings and theatrical effects, gaudy lyrics, pathetic touches and such. We are brought face to face with the utter helplessness of man; with the sorrows and strivings of the soul. Tragedy is being brought home to the very front doors of the people - to the level of real life. Mixed motives and conflicting passions are skilfully analyzed, making the plays of Euripides richer in stirring incidents than those of his forerunners. What we lose in gravity and power we gain in versatility and sensationalism. Symonds, in speaking of stern womanly stoicism and unity of motive stressed in Euripides' two masterpieces, "Medea" and "Hippolytus", says of the first:

"Not Othello and not Faust have a more complete internal unity of motive. No modern play has an equal external harmony of form. Medea was one of the most romantic figures of Greek story. Daughter of the sun-god in the Colchian land of mystery and magic, she unfolded like some poisonous flower, gorgeous to look upon, with flaunting petals and intoxicating scent but deadly. Terrible indeed in wiles she learned to love Jason. By a series of crimes in which the hero participated as her accomplice, and of which he reaped the benefits - by the betrayal of her father's trust, by the murder of her brother, by the butchery of Pelias - she placed her lover on the throne of Thessaly".



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Later, fickle Jason, forgetful of Medea, marries Glauce, daughter of the king of Corinth, and Medea pretending friendliness, sends her a poisoned robe which destroys Glauce and her father. Then to complete her revenge she slays her two children. The heartbroken Jason became infuriated. Before killing her babes, however, Medea addresses them in one of the most beautiful bits of pathos extant -

"O children, children! you have still a city,  
A home where, lost to me, and all my woe,  
You will live out your lives without a mother!  
But I - lo! I am for another land,  
Leaving the joy of you:- to see you happy,  
To deck your marriage bed, to greet your bride,  
To light your wedding-torch shall not be mine!" <sup>1</sup>

We behold her still hesitating between mother-love and revenge; whether to spare her beloved babes or sacrifice them on the altar of her mad jealousy. Then as the thought of Jason's infidelity blinded her, she again became the raging tigress thwarted and crazed. Verily "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned", as the poet says; and in this mood Medea slays the children, and bitterly taunting Jason who tries without avail to seize her, rises superbly, high in the air, in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. This is Euripides at his best with a melodramatic spectacle worthy of a modern "thriller." How the small "deus ex machina" must have startled such playgoers who then saw it for the first time.

It is not easy to condone Jason's treatment of Medea. She, despite her failings, by sheer ability, brought him into prominence. Only by her aid could he have achieved the

<sup>1</sup> J.A.Symonds "Studies of the Greek poets."



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wonders he did. As she well said -

I saved thee as the Grecian chieftains know,  
Who in the Argo shared this enterprise  
With thee, when sent to bend beneath the yoke  
The bulls whose breath was fire, and in the ground  
To sow the direful seed. The dragon placed  
A sleepless guard to keep the golden fleece,  
Voluminous in many a scaly fold  
I slew, and to thee raised the light of life.

After all she had done for him, Jason's act in casting off  
Medea would seem to proclaim him the first cad and rotter of his  
day.

The nurse, loyal to Medea, mourns over the situation -

- - - all is variance now  
And hate: for Jason to his children false,  
False to my mistress for a royal bride  
Hath left her couch and wedded Creon's daughter.

This insult was not to be borne by the slighted Medea, and

- - - like a storm  
Her passions swell - - -

She becomes a veritable tigress whom none may approach with  
safety. But she has loyal defenders in the Nurse, Tutor and  
the Chorus who pity her while they condemn the faithless Jason.  
The Nurse says:

- - - my griefs  
Swell for Medea's sufferings to such height  
That strong desire impelled me to come forth  
And tell them to the earth and to the skies.

The nurse feels that terrible events are imminent, fore-  
shadowed by the despair and wild nature of Medea, whose  
brooding in silence she is certain, bodes no good. Already  
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to stir Medea to action. While playing for time, which the unsuspecting Creon allows her, she encompasses the deaths of Jason's bride-to-be, Glauce and Creon. Then after a conflict in which the mother instinct battled fiercely with jealous hatred, she killed her sons, bitterly reviling Jason the while to enrage him the more. She shows him the bodies of his babes and while he, furious with rage, tries to seize her, she mounts to the skies with the bodies of her children in a chariot drawn by winged dragons.

The chorus quietly and sadly, warn that what the gods will must be suffered in patience.

- - - Thus the god  
To these hath given and end we never thought:  
Such is the dreadful fortune of this day.

But, besides these great dramatists, there was a swarm of later and lesser poets, some quite obscure others more outstanding. One of the first mentioned is Ion of Chios, an Ionian living much at Athens. He wrote elegies, melic poems, epigrams, tragedies and prose works. He wrote between twelve and forty tragedies about Ol.74 to 89.3. Acheus of Eretria, (between Ol.74 and 83), was said by Athenaeus to have been smooth in style but dark and enigmatical. Some critics considered him second only to Aeschylus. He wrote fourteen dramas and gained one prize.

Agathon, son of Tisamenus, mentioned by Aristophanes in the "Thesmophoriazusae" as effeminate and luxurious, is viewed in a quite different light by Plato. In the "Symposium" he is described as a gentleman and an aristocrat. He is said



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to have copied the style of Gorgias, the Sicilian. He died at the Macedonian court. Only seven titles of his plays remain; "Thyestes"; "The Destruction of Ilium"; "Alcmaean"; "Aerope"; "Thyestes"; "The Flower". He flourished about Ol.83 to B.C. 405.

Critias composed "Sisyphus", a play often ascribed to Euripides, and "Peirithous"; also doubtful. Xenocles, a contemporary of Euripides, is mentioned as having defeated the later in a dramatic contest about 415 B.C. Two sons of Aeschylus followed in his footsteps. One of them, Euphorion, defeated Euripides in Ol.87.4. Iophon, son of Sophocles, also composed plays. In addition to these there was a host of obscure dramatists.

#### Attic Comedy.

#### - VI -

There were many minor dramatists, some of them contemporary with the great master, Aristophanes, who are worthy of mention. Chionides, believed to be the earliest of the proper Attic comedians, composed about Ol.80. Three titles "The Heroes"; "The Persians"; or "Assyrians"; and a doubtful work "Beggars" are mentioned. Magnes is cited in the parabasis of Aristophanes "Knights" as having been once popular. He was alive about Ol.80. He is said to have written a "Birds" and a "Frogs" as well as several other plays which are doubtful. Euphantides, a contemporary of Magnes, has but one title extant, the "Satyrs".

Next we come to a very important name, Cratinus, called by Mahaffy "the real originator, the Aeschylus of political comedy." He corrected the loose, irregular methods used by



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Susarion and his group, by limiting the characters of comedy to three. Then he added seriousness to mere amusement, by criticizing and lashing evil doers with his comedy. But even his plays show crudity. Cratinus was the son of Callimades, and was said to have been taxiarch of the tribe Oeneis, and a man of means. He is said to have attained the age of ninety-seven years, bringing out his last play Ol.89.1. His first victory was probably won with "Archilochi" about 452 B.C. Aristophanes hinted in the "Peace" that he died of grief at the loss of a jar of wine when the Spartans invaded Attica. When the same poet mocked him as a broken-down old man, who had once been popular to such an extent that songs from his plays were on everyones lips, he replied by composing his famous "Wineflask" which defeated Aristophanes' "Clouds". He was not a prolific writer, for only twenty-one plays are credited to him. Nine won first prize. The loose structure of his plots and hurried method of writing point to over-conviviality and idleness. The plot of only one of his plays, the "Putine" is even slightly known. In this the old poet represents himself as lawfully wedded to Comedy, but inclined to neglect her for Inebriety, so that Comedy sues him for desertion, and discusses with his friends her sad case. The titles of all his plays survive and many fragments.

It is amusing to note that he pokes fun at Aristophanes for his over-subtlety and pedantry. He was fond of referring to the good old times and the golden age.

Mahaffy says of him; "The general impression produced by the rags and tatters of this great poet is very similar to that which we form on fuller grounds of Aristophanes. There



assertion and his group, by limiting the characters of comedy to three. Then he added seriousness to mere amusement, by criticizing and fashioing evil doers with his comedy. But even his plays show gravity. Cratinus was the son of Callimachus, and was said to have been taxiderm of the tribe Genais, and a man of means. He is said to have attained the age of ninety-seven years, bringing out his last play O. 89.1. His first victory was probably won with "Archilochoi" about 488 B.C. Aristophanes hinted in the "Peace" that he died of grief at the loss of a jar of wine when the Spartans invaded Attica. When the same poet mocked him as a broken-down old man, who had once been popular to such an extent that songs from his plays were on everyone's lips, he replied by composing his famous "Winetask" which defeated Aristophanes' "Clouds". He was not a prolific writer, for only twenty-one plays are credited to him. Nine won first prize. The loose structure of his plots and hurried method of writing point to over-conviviality and idleness. The plot of only one of his plays, the "Frogs" is even slightly known. In this the old poet represents himself as lawfully wedded to Comedy, but inclined to neglect her for Inebriety, so that Comedy sues him for desertion, and discusses with his friends her sad case. The titles of all his plays survive and many fragments. It is amusing to note that he pokes fun at Aristophanes for his over-sensitiveness and pedantry. He was fond of referring to the good old times and the golden age. Mahaffy says of him: "The general impression produced by the rage and tatters of this great poet is very similar to that which we form on fuller grounds of Aristophanes. There



is the same terse rigour, the same unsparing virulence, the same Attic grace and purity, nor need we wonder that he was held worthy by the Athenians of a higher place than his great rival on more than one occasion".<sup>1</sup>

Crates, a young contemporary of Cratinus, is said to have been at first his actor. Aristotle in the "Poetics" mentions him as having adopted the style of Epicharnus and Phormio, abstaining from personal satire, and portraying types. Fourteen titles of his plays are cited.

Pherecrates, also an actor, comes next. Thirteen titles seem genuine. His fragments contain personal attacks against Alcibiades, Melanthius, the tragic poet, and others. Like Crates he avoided personal abuse, and was noted for his invention of new plots. More than two hundred fragments remain showing the refined and elegant Atticism of the poet. He wrote much on social vices, gluttony, luxury and drunkenness. Several of his plays were named after "heterae". He originated the idea of a play with scenes in Hades, in which Aeschylus appeared. Aristophanes stole the idea for his "Frogs".

Passing by a crowd of lesser comics we come to perhaps, the greatest of them all - Eupolis, rival and fellow poet of Aristophanes. Born in Athens 449 B.C. he wrote his first play at the age of seventeen, a most unusual performance, and one only equaled by Antiphanes and Menander. Since there was a law against any poet bringing out a comedy before the age of thirty he, like others, probably brought out his early plays under the names of other writers. Eupolis is said to have been drowned at Cynossema with the connivance of Alcibiades who hated him for his political satires - he had ridiculed

<sup>1</sup>Mahaffy "History of Classic Greek Literature"



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Alcibiades and his aristocratic set. We know little of his life excepting some anecdotes of his faithful dog and his faithless slave, Ephialtes, who stole his comedies. He was brilliant, witty and refined, co-operating with Aristophanes in the "Knights" of which the last parabasis was written by him. Later he probably quarreled with Aristophanes for both satirized one another openly. In style and genius he more closely resembled Aristophanes than did any of the others. Like Aristophanes he unsparingly criticized the democratic party and their aristocrat leaders.

Fourteen of the titles ascribed to him appear to be genuine. His "Goats" had a chorus of goats. The "Autolycus" satirized a beautiful youth, favorite of the wealthy Callias, also mentioned in Xenophon's "Symposium". Callias, himself, and his sophist friends are portrayed in the "Flatterers". The "Baptai" ridiculed the worship of Cotytto for its ribaldry and obscenity. A lost play the "Demoi" mentioned Solon, Pericles, Miltiades, and other great men as coming back from the dead and asking questions about present conditions at Athens. The "Poleis" has a chorus of personified tributary cities. In the "Prospaltion" he attacked the litigiousness of the people. His "Merikas" (charged by Aristophanes with plagiarism from the "Knights") ridiculed Hyperbolus. In the "Taxiarchs" the famous admiral Phormio, the chief character, undertook the naval training of Dionysus who disliked hard work. The "Golden Age" extolled the delights of a return to a primitive state of innocence and peace.



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In the hands of Aristophanes and his contemporaries the Greek language had become a perfect thing, reaching its highest point in vigor, grace, and fullness. The Old Attic Comedy represents the Zenith of Greek literature, Aristophanes the incomparable comic dramatist of all time.



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ARISTOPHANES - THE SCOFFER.

VI.

In viewing Aristophanes we are to deal with a personality who has probably caused as much anti and pro discussion as has fallen to the lot of any one being. In the front rank of the antis, those who were shocked at the immorality of Aristophanes, let us place Mr. W. Cleaver Wilkinson, lover of Greek literature, but very, very chary of our poet, whom he designated as clever but downright and out and out "bad". In the opposite ranks containing the enthusiastic of the great dramatist, Symonds, with ardent if slightly misplaced enthusiasm, asserts that Aristophanes is never vulgar! He might as well have said that Aristophanes is never "wicked!" And the remarkable thing is that undoubtedly both critics are right; for Aristophanes is at times highly immoral - so immoral in fact that translators are prone to trip daintily among his salacious allusions in order to avoid contamination. On the other hand we notice perhaps, <sup>too</sup> readily, ~~such~~ <sup>so</sup> unlovely and tainted instances, which after all, are but a few scars among the many beauties. Some critics are limited in that they do not try to read Aristophanes with Greek perception. They do not view Hellenic things as the Greeks did, but attempt to bring them within the scope of modern perception. Of course, this is an impossibility. Symonds, whom we like for his loyalty, says concerning Greek ideals: "The struggle for existence has dulled the edge of our dreams of the beautiful. How can we bridge over the gulf which separates us from the Greeks. How can we - - - shake hands across the centuries with these



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young-eyed, strong-limbed, immortal children?"<sup>1</sup>

Aristophanes was born probably, about the year 448 B.C. , at Athens, or as some writers have it, in Rhodes or Egypt. It seems there was always a doubt about his place of birth. He died 385 B.C. We are very much in the dark concerning his parents, particularly his mother. Rumor has it that the father's name was Philippus, and that he was an Egyptian or Rhodian.

Mahaffy says nothing is known about the poet's educational advantages, but he must have had a good education for he knew intimately the works of Aeschylus, Stesichorus and Pindar. These he probably studied under expensive teachers - quite a luxury in those days. Judging from Plato's "Symposium", Aristophanes was a man of culture, and prominent among the aristocracy of Athens. He is said to have written at least forty-four comedies of which eleven have come down to us.

Aristophanes presents the unique spectacle of a man who pretends to honor the gods while at the same time mocking them. As one professor said: "He makes the gods hop a jazz dance," and act hardly associated with a religious frame of mind. Aristophanes constantly satirizes Dionysus, patron of the drama; nor did he forget Euripides and Socrates whom he lashed for undermining religion, forgetful that he himself had made a laughing stock of Zeus and the other gods.

"Politically he was uncompromising and conservative, seeing nothing but disaster ahead for Athens because of its abandonment of the old beliefs, and the ancient political

1 J.A.Symonds "Studies of the Greek Poets."



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systems. He would have the Athenians go back to the Golden Age of Marathon and the politics of Aristides the Just."<sup>1</sup> He had little use for a democracy which favored his pet aversion, the demagogue, who lured the people to ruin.

His plays are a combination of daring brilliancy, and poetical flights unsurpassed by any other dramatist. He can pass rapidly from scurrilous description to poetic rhapsody of such amazing beauty that one becomes entranced at the sudden change.

"True comedy," said Voltaire, "is the speaking picture of the Follies and Foibles of a nation." He had Aristophanes in mind. An ardent admirer C. C. Felton of Harvard University, said of him; "His manifold and startling wit has been surpassed neither by the myriad-minded Shakespeare nor the inimitable Moliere."<sup>2</sup>

It was quite in keeping with the fashion of the day to throw mud at the great. There were so many jibes and thrusts made at Pericles the "onion-headed", by the comic dramatists of Aristophanes' time that there scarcely remained an accusation that had not been levelled against him. We can only think of one more ghastly and terrible charge.

Aristophanes might have said of him "Pericles became so utterly abandoned that only one worse step was possible; he joined the Fire Department!"

Unlike Plato, who described only the better class, the refined and elegant gentlemen who delighted in dialectic

1 C. C. Felton Preface to Aristophanes "Clouds."

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and hair-splitting definitions and abstractions, Aristophanes gives us the common people with all their imperfections heaped upon their heads. We are impressed with the similarity between the Athenian rabble and that of Shakespeare's time. Even the best of people attended performances of the Aristophanic plays.

" They sat in the theatre for hours on end applauding a kind of Billingsgate Falstaff at his worst never approached; listening to violent invectives against the men - and the women - of Athens as a drunken, greedy, venal, vicious lot; laughing at jokes that would have put Rabelais to the blush." <sup>1</sup>

Aristophanes' comedy, "The Clouds", is one of his most popular plays, and contains fewer indecencies than most of the others. For this reason, and because it is a good example of the author's best dramatic and lyrical style, we will glean some of its choicest passages. We quote from W.J.Hickie's translation. First the brief argument of the "Clouds".

Strepsiades, a wealthy farmer of Cicynna, has been reduced to poverty by the extravagance of his son, Phidippides. He has heard of the new and wonderful art of reasoning, by which the Sophists can make the worse appear the better cause; and hopes that under the tuition of Socrates he may reach such skill, and cleverness in arguing as will enable him to elude his creditors. All attempts to make him understand the subtleties of the new philosophy are found to be in vain; and his son Phidippides is substituted in his place, as a more hopeful pupil.

<sup>1</sup> Edith Hamilton "The Greek Way."



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The youth gives rapid proof of his aptness by beating his father when they next meet, explaining that this proceeding is right and lawful. The eyes of the foolish old man are at length opened to the wickedness of the new doctrines, and their professors. He sets fire to the school of Socrates and the play ends like a modern melodrama in a grand conflagration.

The play opens with Strepsiades waking up in bed, after a restless night. He is speaking -

Ah! me!! ah me! O king Jupiter of what a terrible length the nights are! Will it never be day? And yet long since I heard the cock - - - -Neither does the excellent youth awake through the night; but takes his ease, wrapped up in fine blankets. Well, if it is the fashion let us snore wrapped up.

He lies down but cannot sleep worrying about debts incurred through his son's fondness for chariots, horses and gambling. Phidippides agrees to be advised by his father, and together they visit Socrates' "thinking-shop".

Strép. - These men teach, if one gives them money, to conquer in speaking, right or wrong.

Phid. - Who are they?

Strep. - - - - they are minute - philosophers, noble and excellent.

Phid. - Bah! they are rogues! I know them. You mean the quacks, the pale-faced wretches, the bare-footed fellows, of whose number are the miserable Socrates and Chaerophon.

Strepsiades, his son having refused to do so, applies for admission to the "thinking-shop", and is told that his knocking on the door has caused the "miscarriage of an idea."



The youth gives rapid proof of his progress by beating his father when they next meet, explaining that this proceeding is right and lawful. The eyes of the foolish old man are at length opened to the weakness of the new doctrine, and their professors. He sets fire to the school of Socrates and the play ends like a modern melodrama in a grand conclusion.

The play opens with Strepsiades waking up in bed, after a restless night. He is speaking.

"I'm tired and I'm a little out of breath of what a terrible length the night is! Will it never be day? And yet long since I heard the cock - - - - - Neither does the excellent youth wake through the night; not takes his ease, wrapped up in fine blankets. Well, it is the fashion let us make wrapped up."

He lies down but cannot sleep worrying about debts incurred through his son's fondness for chariots, horses and gambling. Pheidippides agrees to be advised by his father, and together they visit Socrates' "thinking-shop."

Streps. - These men teach, if one gives them money, to converse in speaking, right or wrong.

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Strepsiades, his son having refused to do so, applies for admission to the "thinking-shop", and is told that his knocking on the door has caused the "miscarriage of an idea."



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A disciple explains that the "idea" concerned how many of its own feet a flea could jump;" for after having bit the eye-brow of Chaerophon it leaped away onto the head of Socrates."

Strep. - How, then, did he measure this,"

Disciple - Most cleverly. He melted some wax, and then took the flea and dipped its feet in the wax; and then a pair of Persian slippers stuck to it when cooled. Having gently loosened these, he measured back the distance.

Strepsiades is greatly impressed with the depth of the thought. He enters the school and after seeing the disciple, notices some one suspended in a basket.

Strep. - - - Come, who is the man who is in the basket?

Disciple - Himself.

Strep. - And who is "Himself"?

Disciple - Socrates.

After some arguing back and forth he tells his troubles to Socrates and is admitted as a disciple. But he proves a dull student, failing utterly in Socrates' memory test. In the pause that ensues, Socrates invokes the heavenly clouds to give a demonstration of their power to the doubting Strepsiades. Right here occurs one of the most delicious things in Aristophanes where he describes the approach of the clouds accompanied by resounding thunder claps.

Chorus of Clouds.

Eternal Clouds!

Rise we to mortal view



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Aristophanes where he describes the approach of the clouds  
accompanied by resounding thunder claps.  
Chorus of Clouds.

Eternal Clouds!

Rise we to mortal view



Embodied in bright shapes of dewy sheen,  
Leaving the depths, serene,  
Where our loud sounding Father Ocean dwells,  
For the wood crowned summits of the hills!  
Thence shall our glance command  
The beetling crags, which sentinel the land.  
The teeming earth, the crops we bring to birth,  
Thence shall we hear  
The music of the ever-flowing streams,  
The low deep thunders of the booming sea.  
Low, the bright Eye of Day unwearied beams!  
Shedding our veil of storms  
From our immortal forms.

We scan with keen-eyed gaze this nether sphere! <sup>1</sup>

Later there is a farcical contest for the benefit of the youth, between the Just Argument and Unjust Argument, which the latter wins to the honor and glory of "the new way" of things.

Just Argument.

Cast in thy lot, O youth with me and choose the better  
path -  
So shalt thou hate the Forum's prate, and shun the  
lazy baths;  
Be shamed for what is truly shame, and blush when  
shame is said,  
And rise up from thy seat in hall before the hoary  
head;  
Be dutious to thy parents, to no base act incline,  
But keep fair Honor's image deep within thine heart  
enshrined;  
And speak no rude irreverent word against thy father's  
years,  
Whose strong hand led thine infant steps and dried  
thy childhood's tears. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Collins "Ancient Classics"  
<sup>2</sup> J.H. Frere "Aristophanes "Clouds"



Embosomed in bright shapes of bowy cheer,  
 Leaving the depths, serene,  
 Where our land bounding Father Ocean dwells,  
 For the wood-crowned summits of the hills!  
 Thence shall our glance command  
 The beaming crops, which sentinel the land,  
 The smiling earth, the crops we bring to birth,  
 Thence shall we hear  
 The music of the ever-flowing streams,  
 The low deep hummers of the humming bee,  
 Low, the bright eye of Day unwearyed beams!  
 Shedding our veil of storm  
 From our immortal tower,  
 We scan with keen-eyed gaze this nation's sphere!  
 Later there is a tactical contest for the benefit of the  
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 the latter wins to the honor and glory of "the new way" of  
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#### Just Argument.

Cast in thy lot, O youth with me and choose the better  
 - both -  
 So shalt thou hate the Norman's grudge, and shun the  
 lazy dach;  
 Be shamed for what is truly shame, and blush when  
 shame is well;  
 And rise up from thy seat in hall before the party  
 head;  
 Be faithful to thy country, to no base not incline,  
 But keep fair honor's image deep within thine heart  
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 And speak no rude irreverent words against thy father's  
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 Whose strong hand fed thine infant eyes and dried  
 thy childhood's tears.



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This is good, but not good enough to win. The Unjust Argument gains a decision "on points" because of his heavier artillery of abuse and character belittling.

Unjust Argument (and Just)

Unjust A. - Come now, from what class do our lawyers spring?

Just A. - Well - from the blackguards.

Unjust A. - I believe you. Tell me  
Again what are our tragic poets?

Just A. - Blackguards all.

Unjust A. - D'ye see now, how absurd and utterly worthless  
your argument has been? And now look round -  
(turning to the audience)

Which class amongst our friends seems most numerous?

Just A. - I'm looking.

Unjust A. - Well now, tell me what you see

Just A. - (After gravely and attentively examining the rows  
of spectators)  
The blackguards have it by a large majority.  
There's one I know and yonder there's another -  
And there, again, that fellow with long hair.<sup>1</sup>

Such buffoonery would of course bring down any house. The Just Argument throws up the case. The son is now put in trim for battle with his father's creditors whom he easily conquers in court. But the father's elation turns to dismay when the son makes unexpected use of his new learning by thrashing his father, showing with volubility that he is justified in so doing. The now angry father resolves to avenge himself on Socrates and the Clouds. Torch in hand he mounts a ladder to the "thinking-shop" and in reply to students who ask him what he is doing there, he replies -

<sup>1</sup> W.J.Hickie "The Clouds of Aristophanes".



This is good, but not good enough to win. The unjust  
argument gains a decision "on points" because of his heavier  
artillery of abuse and character belittling.

Unjust Argument (and Just)

Unjust A. - Come now, from what class is our lawyer speaking?

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Unjust A. - I believe you. Tell me  
again what are our tragic poets?

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Just A. - (After gravely and attentively examining the rows  
of spectators)  
The blackboards have it by a large majority.  
There's one I know and wonder how another -  
and there, again, that fellow with long hair.

Such buffoonery would of course bring down any house.

The Just Argument throws up the case. The son is now put in

his for battle with his father's creditors whom he easily

conquers in court. But the father's elation turns to dismay

when the son makes unexpected use of his new learning by

thrashing his father, showing with volubility that he is

justified in so doing. The now angry father resolves to

avenge himself on Baccarat and the Glenda. Tired in hand he

mounts a ladder to the "thinking-shop" and in reply to students

who ask him what he is doing there, he replies -

I.W.I. Hinkle "The Glenda of Aristophanes".



Holding a subtle disputation with the rafters.  
(Athrast at Socrates hanging in the basket)

And Socrates himself, is informed by the irate old fellow -

I walk in air and contemplate the sun.

Evidently we are to assume a grand finale in which the  
"thinking-shop" goes up in flames.

But we have only shown one side of Aristophanes; there is another and a better one. In purity, and loftiness of conception, some of his beautiful lyrics are almost unapproachable. Here are a few selected at random from the various plays. First is the famous "Hoopes Call to the Nightingale" from the "Birds".

Awake! Awake!

Sleep no more my gentle mate  
With your tiny tawny bill  
Wake the tuneful echo shrill,  
On vale or hill;  
Or on her airy, rocky seat  
Let her listen and repeat  
The tender ditty that you tell  
The sad lament  
The dire event  
To luckless Itys that befell  
Thence the strain  
Shall rise again  
And soon amain  
Up to the lofty palace gate  
Where mighty Apollo sits in state  
In Jove's abode with his ivory lyre  
Hymning aloud to the heavenly choir  
While all the gods shall join with thee  
In a celestial symphony .1

In the "Frogs" we are confronted with the very ludicrous situation of frogs diving into the water to escape the rain, and probably to keep from getting wet. The Chorus of Frogs is chanting -

With the vernal heat reviving  
Our aquatic crew repair

1 From Capps "From Homer to Theocritus".



holding a subtle disposition with the referee.  
(Aristot at Aristotle hanging in the basket)

And Aristotle himself, is informed by the first old fellow -

I walk in air and contemplate the sun.

Evidently we are to assume a grand finale in which the

"thinking-shop" goes up in flames.

But we have only shown one side of Aristophanes; there is

another and a better one. In purity, and loftiness of con-

ception, some of his beautiful lyrics are almost unapproachable.

Here are a few selected at random from the various plays.

First is the famous "Hoopoes Call to the Nightingales" from the

"Birds".

Awake! Awake!

Awake no more my gentle mate  
With your tiny downy bill  
Wake the heavenly echo shrill  
On vale or hill;  
Or on her airy, rocky seat  
Let her listen and repeat  
The tender ditty that you tell  
The sad lament  
The dire event  
To loneliness I say that befall  
Thence the strain  
Shall rise again  
And soon again  
Up to the lofty palace gate  
Where mighty Apollo sits in state  
In love's ecstasies with his ivory lyre  
Hymning aloud to the heavenly choir  
While all the gods shall join with thee  
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With the vexatious heat roving  
Our aquatic crew repair

I From Cappa "From Homer to Theocritus".



From their periodic sleep  
 In the dark and chilly deep  
 To the cheerful upper air;  
 Then we frolic here and there  
 All amidst the meadows fair;  
 Shady plants of asphodel  
 Are the lodgers where we dwell;  
 Chanting in the leafy bowers  
 All the live long summer hours  
 Till the sudden gusty showers  
 Send us headlong helter-skelter  
 To the pond to seek for shelter.  
 Meagre, eager, leaping, lunging,  
 From the sedgy wharfage plunging  
 To the tranquil depths below,  
 There we muster all a-row;  
 Where secure from toil and trouble,  
 With a tuneful bubble, bubble,  
 Our symphonious accents flow,  
 Brekeke - kesh, koash, koash! 1

Agathon's song to Phoebus, in the "Thesmophoriazusae"  
 is worthy of Sappho, herself.

Agathon - (An actor)

- Move ye slowly with the holy  
 Torchlight due to awful shades,  
 Singing sweetly, dancing featly,  
 Yes, and neatly, free born maids.
- (As Chorus) - Whose the song of festal praises?  
 Only tell us we are zealous  
 Evermore but hymns to raise.
- (As actor) - Sing of Leto! Sing of Thee, too,  
 Archer of the golden bow,  
 Bright Apollo, in the hollow  
 Glades where Ilian rivers flow,  
 Building buildings long ago.
- (As Chorus) - Raise the music softly swelling  
 To the fame of Leto's name,  
 To the god in song excelling,  
 Brightest he of all there be!  
 Giving gifts of minstrelsy.
- (As actor) - Sing the maiden quiver laden  
 From the woodland oaks emerging  
 Haunted shades of mountain glades  
 Artemis the ever Virgin.
- (As Chorus) - We rejoice heart and voice,  
 Hymning, praising, gently phrasing  
 Her, the maiden quiver laden.
- (As actor) - Soft pulsation of the Asian  
 Lyre, to which the dancers go  
 When the high and holy Graces  
 Weave their swiftly whirling paces,  
 Phrygian measure, to and fro.
- (As Chorus) - Lyre Elysian heavenly vision







47

When thy witching tones arise  
Comes the light of joy and gladness  
Flashing from immortal eyes.  
Eyes will glisten, ears will listen  
When our manful numbers ring  
Mighty son of Leto,  
Thine the glory, Thou the King.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the same play the chorus of women, not to be  
outdone by the men sing the glory of Athene.

Pallas we call upon  
Chastest and purest one  
Maiden and Virgin, our  
Revels to see.  
Guarding our portals  
Alone of Immortals  
Mightily, potently,  
Keeping the key.  
Hater of Tyranny  
Come, for we call thee, we  
Women in chorus.  
Bring Peace again with thee  
Jocundly, merrily,  
Sacred, unearthly ones  
Awfullest Shades,  
Graciously, peacefully  
Come to your glades  
Man must not gaze on thee  
Rites at your Shrine.  
Torch-glimmer flashing o'er  
Features divine.  
Come for we're pouring,  
Imploring, adoring,  
Intense veneration  
Dawn on your worshippers  
Giver of Homer and our  
Civilization.<sup>2</sup>

1 Benjamin Rogers "The Thesmophoriazusae."

2 the same



When thy winking torches rise  
Come the light of joy and gladness  
Flashing from immortal eyes,  
Thou wilt gladden, thou wilt lighten  
When our mortal numbers ring  
Mighty son of Iago,  
Telling the glory, thou the King.

Later in the same play the chorus of women, not to be

outside of the men sing the glory of Athens.

Belles we call upon  
Greatest and truest one  
Maiden and virgin, our  
Revels to see,  
Guarding our portals  
Alone of immortals  
Mightily, potently,  
Keeping the key,  
Hater of tyranny  
Come, for we call thee, we  
Knew in Athens  
Bring peace again with thee  
Jocundly, merrily,  
Sacred, unsexedly once  
Maiden of Athens,  
Graciously, graciously  
Come to your places  
Men must not kneel on this  
Rites of your shrine  
Torch-glitter flashing o'er  
Festive divine  
Come for we're waiting,  
Imagined, imagined  
Intense vegetation  
Down on your worshippers  
Giver of Honor and our  
Civilization.

I have written "The Theophrastus"  
in the same



### General Summary.

From the beginning we have followed the course of the Greek people in their pursuit of an ideal - beauty. Then we saw that ideal of beauty enshrined for all time in what was probably their greatest contribution to posterity, the drama which they not only originated, but perfected. Commencing with the orgies of the devotees of Dionysus, the wine god, the revellers caroused and chanted rude snatches of song which later developed into a semblance of regularity with a leader who trained certain groups, or choruses. To the best chorus a skin of wine was given as a prize. And as Tragedy started in Dithyrambic poetry, so Comedy had a similar origin in the Phallic Procession, or Comus, or wandering dance; but the real founder of Comedy was Epicharnus of Sicily, who invented the plot by unifying the different episodes. R. G. Moulton says ; "The Dithyramb was the direct address to the god of nature: the Phallic Procession gave vent to yet wilder abandon and the loosest of nature joys". An important change made by Arion of Lesbos, inventor of Dithyrambic poetry, was the Satyr Chorus consisting of fifty males dressed like satyrs. Afterwards Thespis, the Attic poet, the first individual actor.

Next Aeschylus added a second actor, and further improved the chorus. He raised the drama to a lofty position by the beauty of his diction, and the greatness of his themes. In his own forte no one ever surpassed Aeschylus the sublime.

Next in order came Sophocles, who introduced a third actor, and still further improved the chorus. He is known as the Great Humanist because of his insistence on the importance



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saw that ideal of beauty embodied for all time in what was  
probably their greatest contribution to humanity, the drama,  
which they not only originated, but perfected. Following  
with the origin of the doctrine of Dionysus, the wine god,  
the revelers caroused and chanted in the mountains of song,  
which later developed into a semblance of tragedy with a  
leader who trained certain groups, or choruses. To the best  
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R. C. Monteton says: "The Dithyramb was the direct ancestor of  
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Next in order came Sophocles, who introduced a third actor,  
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Great Humanist because of his insistence on the importance



of man in creation, instead of Fate, the Aeschylean "sine qua non". In the hands of Sophocles "who saw life steadily, and saw it whole", drama became a thing of beauty. His poetical descriptions are like a breath of summer.

After Sophocles came Euripides the Great Realist, who, men said, brought the gods of Olympus down to earth. This poet gives us life as it actually is, instead of as it ought to be. His plays abound in splendid oratory and great pathos, with much of the melodramatic. Many lesser poets followed.

Last of all the great scoffer, Aristophanes, Emperor of Comics, makes his bow. With him a hatred of modern ways, and a longing for the return of the good old times was uppermost. He had little use for the Athens of his time, and he satirized and ridiculed the great moderns unsparingly. Fiercely he assailed Socrates, Euripides, Cleon, the successor of Pericles, and others. Yet for all his pungence and buffoonery, Aristophanes was the supreme lyricist, and some of his poetry rises to heights seldom equaled, and never surpassed by any of his compeers. Associated with Aristophanes as outstanding representatives of Old Attic Comedy were Cratinus and Eupolis.



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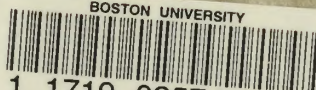








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